L: Tapajós--24 C-6 (1870) 1877 9Q13 Mundurucu 9Q13

Furthermore, during the summer months, large numbers of families leave the malocas and build flimsy huts in the heart of the woods, where in their isolation they encounter more abundant game.

It is certain, however, that this tribe is one of the largest and most powerful in the valley of the Amazon. Alcide d'Orbigny hesitated whether to consider it a mere tribe or a nation. It has long been a strongly organized republic. The central malocas, located beyond the active reach of our authorities, enjoy the same boundless freedom as if they formed an independent state.

In face of the impossibility to carry out by myself a strict census, I must rely on the opinion of a citizens who resides in the town of Itaituba and whom I judge to be very competent in this matter. I refer to Lieutenant Joaquim Caetano Corrêa, a wealthy landowner who was nominated to the post of superintendent of the Tapajos River Indians by Councillor Sebastião do Rego Barros, President of Pará, in September 1853, and who has exercised this function ever since.

Although this respected citizens has never been to the central villages, he nevertheless entertains close relations with the Mundurucu who live along the banks of the Tapajos. [101]

Here is the population table furnished by Lt. Joaquim Caetano Corrêa.

NAME OF THE MALOCAS	POPULATION
Dewajeme	1,500
Caracaps	2,300
Dabi	2,400
Cayipuna	2,000
Necodemus	2,100
Aibá (Semauma)	1,200
Acupari	800
Aracará	700
Aechadurí	400
Tete Caruga	300
Ipanaueri	600

This is the squatting position which was also used by the Quechua and the Egyptians. [The Mundurucu] bury with the deceased a few objects he had used in life, such as weapons, feather ornaments, etc. My interpreter was an intelligent Indian and spoke, besides his Mundurucu dialect, the Portuguese and Tupi tongues. He would translate without hesitation into Mundurucu the following sentences: "I miss my mother -- Nhebeu uxet cabi" "I miss my son -- Nhebeu epote cabi." The word nebbeu means "to miss." "My soul goes to heaven -- Uhiumbi cabi cabi dai."

This knowledge of the heavenly bodies, though still quite rudimentary, their belief in a future life, free from odious superstitions, this faculty to conceive and express abstract ideas and the purest and sweetest feelings of the human heart, such as ereuigio for mother or son -- all this surprised me on the part of a people that has always been considered one of the fiercest and most barbarous in the valley of the Amazon.

If the Mundurucu did not derive their beliefs and knowledge from some of the civilized groups on the Andean Plateau, I presume at least that for centuries they must have lived as the inhabitants of the plains villages do today -- that is, in centers so densely populated as [118] a savage economy based on hunting and the meager resources of a crude husbandry will permit. These villages are in constant communication with each other and preserve the same uses and customs. As I mentioned above, the Mundurucu tattooing persists in really a blood initiation which assigns them with an indelible mark -- a sacred tie binding in brotherly communion all the members of this numerous and powerful tribe.

I will, however, abstain from drawing any conclusions whatsoever. My purpose is to observe facts with scrupulous care and to describe them with fidelity.

It may be that the light sketch I am drawing of the life of a savage tribe will be pondered by one of those superior minds who cogitates on human destiny and on the problems of mankind.

Theirs is the task to plumb the mysteries of Providence, to search for the beginnings of man's journeys on this earth, for the paths he has followed and the destinies that await him.

THE LOCAL GROUP

[illegible] males is extremely close knit and is probably the most cohesive group in Munduruku society. Such is the emotional bond between the women of these groups that I know of [illegible] one who committed suicide because of alienation from her two sisters and house mates. But beyond the extended family, conflicts between individual women or households are common. All women of the household generally join with a member in her antipathy for another woman or household; this, of course, follows from the fact that the housemates are closely related to each other, which complements the allegiance arising from co-residence.

Hostility between the women generally takes the form of malicious gossip. My wife, Yolanda, was the recipient of most of the confidences that passed among the women, which constituted one of our most valuable sources of information. Coleta, an Indian girl who lived in our house and worked for us, used to regale Yolanda by the hour with tales of adultery and of the promiscuity of certain women. Coleta was an excellent source of such data, as she herself was well known for waywardness in affairs of the heart. And we usually managed to learn by this means of the well-espoused hostilities in the village, of fears and accusations of sorcery, and in general of relations between the sexes. Yolanda's participation in the gossip network brought her even closer to the women, and they, in turn, gossiped about her. One of the favored places for the exchange of female information and opinion was the shed where farinha was made. The women usually chatted animatedly as they worked there, but as soon as one left the group, the heads of the others drew together and she was thoroughly discussed; after a couple of months of residence in the village, the same thing happened, as we had no difficulty finding out, when Yolanda left their midst. Gossip is the chief form of expression of antagonism among

LC: Tribes--I E-9 . (1957) .M69 SQLS Mundurucu SQLS

CU
114

The Agriculture of the Mundurukú Indians*

115

*Most of the data that follow were gathered in 1957, in the course of a two-month stay among the Indians of the Franciscan mission of Carará and vicinity. My principal informants were the Mundurukú Tomé, Cirilo, and Antônio. But I am also indebted to the mission fathers for much valuable data, for which I am grateful.

Peabody Museum

Cambridge, Massachusetts

000

I. Present-day knowledge of Mundurukú agriculture
II. Garden methods
III. Social factors
IV. Native terminology

I. Present-day knowledge of Mundurukú agriculture

341
175

What we know of Mundurukú agriculture is little, and most of it is based on the reports of nineteenth-century travelers. Already in those days the Mundurukú were pictured as a people who possessed a certain level of primitive agriculture. These /travelers/ speak of the Mundurukú as living on the margins of the Tapajós River and as already being in the first stage of acculturation to the environment of the area. They deal with the subject of "agriculture" as if it were an ancient culture trait among these Indians. This may indeed be the truth, for we cannot assert the contrary. /2/ Although certain

[31]

341
174